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75 CENTS

LACK OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS LEADS TO CORRUPTION

BY LEAH COOPER
Journal Staff Writer

The Bahamas is opening the door to corruption through its largely unregulated campaign finance system, offering few safeguards against "quid pro quo" donations, according to the United States' 2018 Human Rights Report released

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US REPORT HIGHLIGHTS HAITIAN MIGRANT DISCRIMINATION

BY LEAH COOPER
Journal Staff Writer

The 2018 human rights report issued on Wednesday renewed concerns of stateless individuals in the country, particularly in the

case of a teen born in The Bahamas to a Bahamian mother of Haitian descent.

According to the report, the government did not effectively implement laws and policies to provide certain "habitual

residents" the opportunity to gain nationality in a timely manner and on a nondiscriminatory basis.

Under the constitution, Bahamian-born persons of foreign heritage

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PM Tells Doctors: Combat Noncommunicable Diseases

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
Journal Staff Writer

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis says, "we must do more to combat Non Communicable Diseases which rob us of general

health and too many lives." Whether they are in the form of diabetes or hypertension, heart or kidney disease, chronic and non communicable illnesses are prevalent in The Bahamas, begging

the need then for ongoing attention to prevention and treatment.

The Prime Minister made the remarks on Wednesday evening while addressing the 47th Annual Scientific

Conference of The Medical Association of The Bahamas and The Bahamas Dental Association.

He said, "along with

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Wilchcombe Disagrees With Wharf Redevelopment Concept

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
Journal Staff Writer

Adopting a view held by his party, former Tourism Minister Obie Wilchombe does not agree with the government's plans for the Prince George Wharf.

It was recently announced that UK-based Global Ports



▶ Former Tourism Minister, Obie Wilchombe

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FULL BAHAMIAN DELEGATION ATTENDING THE 63RD COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW63)



▶ Photo of full Bahamian delegation to CSW63, Wednesday, March 13, following Minister of Social Services and Urban Development, the Hon. Frankie A. Campbell's delivery of The Bahamas' National Statement. (BIS Photo/Matt Maura)



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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

US REPORT HIGHLIGHTS HAITIAN MIGRANT

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must apply for citizenship during a 12-month window following their 18th birthday. However sometimes these individuals wait many years for a government response, mainly because of backlogging within the Ministry of Immigration.

The report further indicated that the narrow window for application, difficult document requirements, and long waiting times leave multiple generations, who are predominantly Haitians, without a confirmed nationality.

Just last month, however, Immigration Minister Brent Symonette indicated that the department successfully minimized its backlog in processing permits and other documentation.

He added that the department is now down to six weeks response on work permits.

In March of last year, Minister Symonette also implemented a new policy allowing individuals who missed the 12-month window to gain legal permanent resident status with the right to work.

The report found that no reliable estimates of the number of persons without a confirmed nationality exists; however, "one NGO estimated there were 30,000 to 40,000".

It further indicated that the government asserted a number of "stateless" individuals had a legiti-

mate claim to Haitian citizenship, but refused to pursue it due to fear of deportation or loss of future claim to Bahamian citizenship.

Such persons, it said, often faced waiting for periods of several years for the government to decide on their nationality applications and, as a result, lacked proper documentation to secure employment, housing, and other public services.

The report said, "individuals born in the country to non-Bahamian parents were eligible to apply for "Belonger" status that entitled them to work and have access to public high school-level education and a fee-for-service health-care insurance program".

It added, "Belonger permits were readily available. Authorities allowed individuals born in the country to non-Bahamian parents to pay the tuition rate for Bahamian students when enrolled in College and while waiting for their request for citizenship to be processed".

The lack of a passport, it said, also prohibits students from accessing higher education outside the country.

It said, "In 2017 the government repealed its policy of barring children without legal status from government schools. Community activists alleged some schools continued to discriminate, claiming to be full so as

not to admit children of Haitian descent."

Back in August last year, a local daily reported the case of Taranique Thurston, a Bahamian child born to a Bahamian mother of Haitian descent, that was unable to obtain a passport to travel out of the country for medical treatment.

Because her mother was not a "naturalized Bahamian citizen" at the time of her birth, and her mother was not married at the time to her Bahamian father, Ms. Thurston was not granted Bahamian citizenship at birth.

The government subsequently issued the child a certificate of identity that permitted her travel, listing her nationality as Haitian, despite being two generations removed from birth in Haiti.

This case eventually attracted US press attention as well as the Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

With that media coverage, widespread discrimination against individuals of Haitian descent in the country was brought to the forefront.

The report also indicted that migrants accused police and immigration officers of excessive force and warrantless searches, as well as frequent solicitations of bribes by immigration officials widespread bias against migrants, particularly those of Haitian descent, again was also reported.

PM Tells Doctors: Combat Noncommunicable Diseases

Continued from / PAGE 1...

climate change, the explosive incidence of NCD's represent two of the greatest threats to national development.

"As a matter of urgency, we must more aggressively address sugary drinks and the role they play in obesity, especially childhood and adolescent obesity," he said.

Dr. Minnis pointed out that an important component in delivering health-care is the implementa-

tion of a national electronic medical records system.

"This revolutionary platform will digitally link public clinics and hospitals, so that it will not matter where a patient is seen, the patient's information and medical record can be instantly accessed.

"This will enhance the delivery of care in our hospitals and clinics, improving transitional care between facilities and services, while expanding avenues for medical

research," he said.

Over the next three days, participants will hear from over 30 local speakers and over 20 international experts in their fields.

There will also be an opportunity to exchange ideas that may help improve healthcare practices, save lives and enhance the quality of health.

Held under the theme "pursuing your passion," the conference wraps up on Saturday.

LACK OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Continued from / PAGE 1...

this past Wednesday.

According to the report, the procurement process was particularly susceptible to corruption, as it is opaque, containing no requirement to engage in open public tenders, and does not allow review of award

decisions.

It further stated that the government, nevertheless, "routinely issued open public tenders".

Throughout the course of 2018, the report said that the government launched a process for all vendors

and suppliers to register on an electronic platform to increase transparency and to improve the procurement process.

The Minnis-led government, it said, pursued allegations of official corruption after taking office.



PUBLIC NOTICE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that a Site Plan Application (SPA/2/2019) on behalf of Tonel Investments Limited is being reviewed by the Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

The applicant proposes to construct a shopping plaza along with a storage facility on a 2.5 acre parcel located at the intersection of Carmichael Road and Stew Fish Road and immediately west of Cousin McPhee A.M.E. Church.

A public meeting will be held on March 18th 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Sybil Strachan Primary School (Formerly Carmichael Primary School) located on Carmichael Road.

The preliminary site plan and file for the proposed development are available for viewing at the Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during normal working hours.

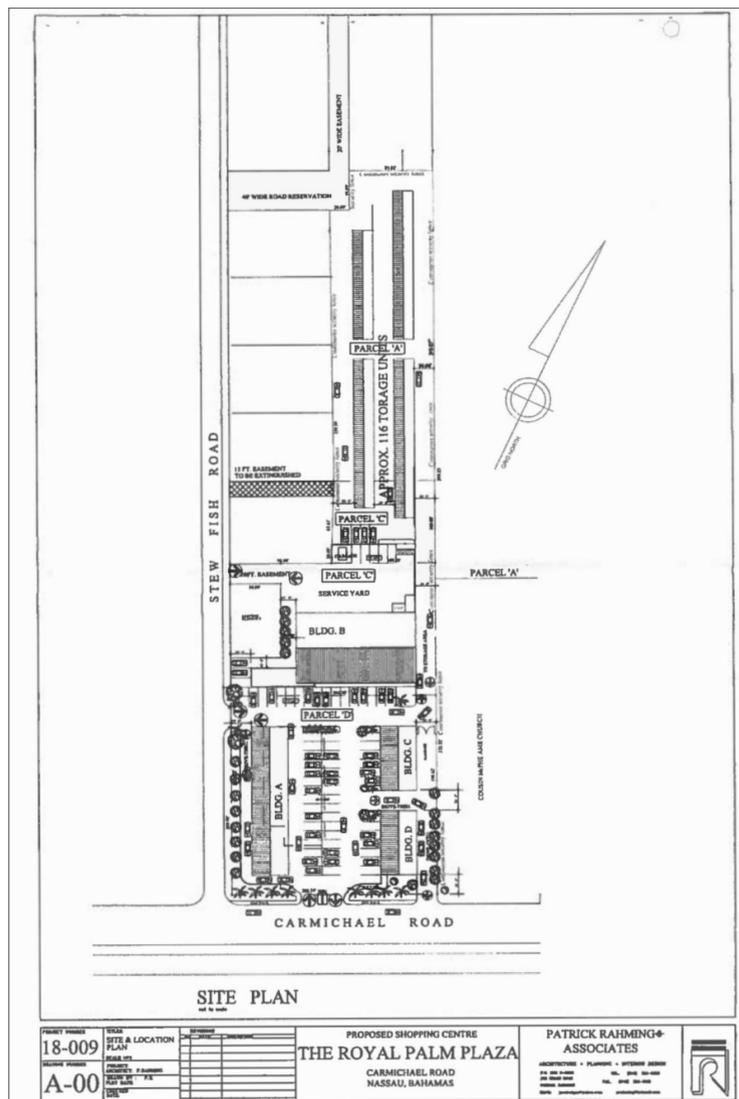
Interested persons and organisations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice.

Submissions should be made via P.O. Box N-1611 Nassau, Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206.

Further inquiries should be made to the Acting Director via Tel: (242)322-7550/2 or (242)328-3202 or CHARLESONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS

Signed

Charles B. Zonicle
Acting Director of Physical Planning



The Bahama Journal

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Government Signs Contract to Clean-Up West End's Dump Site



► Minister of the Environment and Housing, the Hon. Romauld Ferreira (Centre) along with Minister of State for Grand Bahama, Senator the Kwasi Thompson (second from right) and Member of Parliament for West Grand Bahama and Bimini, Pakesia Parker-Edgecombe (second from left) were all a part of a contract signing for the cleanup of the West End Dump, during a press conference, Thursday, March 14, 2019, in the Office of the Prime Minister. Also on hand were Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, Harcourt Brown (right) and Ian Bowe of Bowe's Trucking and Contractor for the clean-up project (left). (BIS Photo/Andrew Miller)



PUBLIC NOTICE

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that an application for Site Plan Approval SPA/11/2018 on behalf of The Diocese of The Bahamas and Turks & Caicos Islands is presently being reviewed by The Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

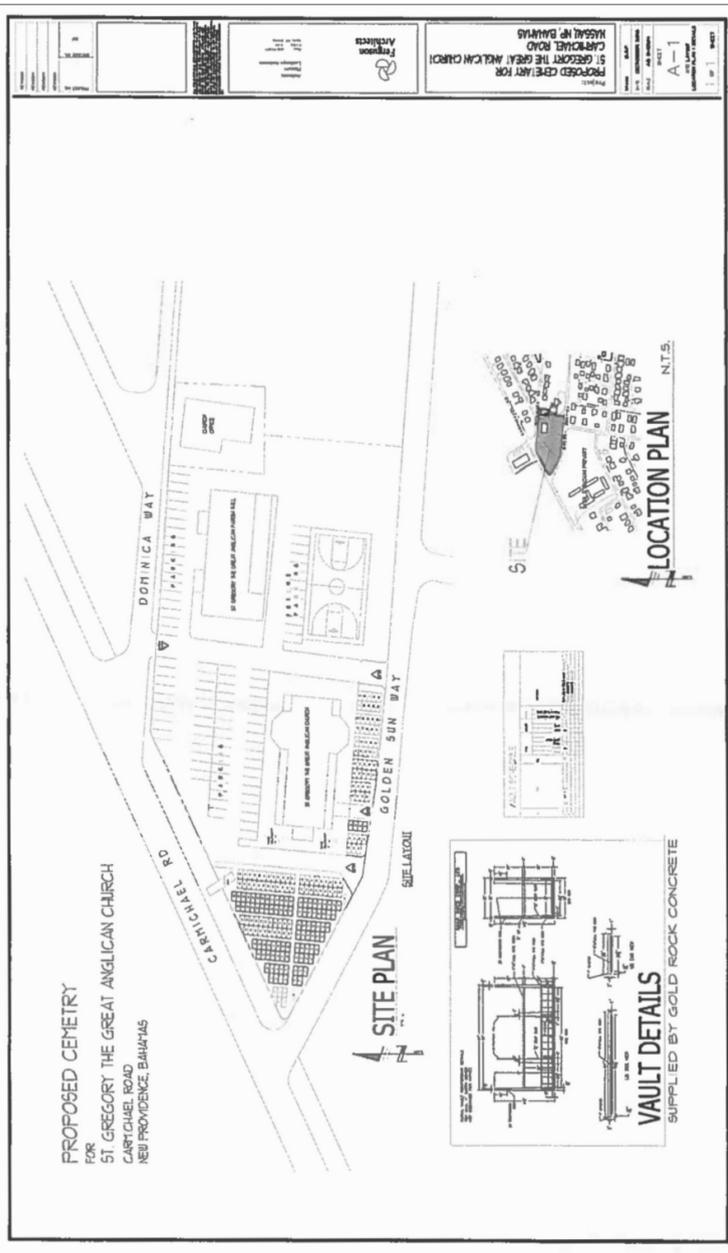
A public meeting will be held on March 12, 2019 at 7pm at Sybil Strachan Primary School (Formerly Carmichael Primary)

The Diocese proposes to develop a portion of the land occupied by St. Gregory's Anglican Church, Carmichael Road and Golden Sun Way, as a burial ground and Columbarium. The project is proposed in two phases, with the in-ground precast vaults comprising the first phase. The construction of the Columbarium is a part of the second phase.

Preliminary plans for the proposed development are available for viewing at The Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during working hours of 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Interested persons and organizations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments prior to the meeting. Comments should be directed to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice. Submissions can be made via P.O Box N-1611, Nassau Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206. Further inquiries can be made to the Acting Director via Tel. (242) 322-7550/1/1 OR (242) 328- 3202 or CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS

Signed
Charles B. Zonicle
Acting Director of Physical Planning



Minister of the Environment and Housing, the Hon. Romauld Ferreira, along with Minister of State for Grand Bahama, Senator the Kwasi Thompson and Member of Parliament for West End and Bimini, Pakesia Parker-Edgecombe came together in the Office of the Prime Minister for the signing of a contract, for the clean-up of the West End dump, Thursday, March 14, 2019.

Senator Thompson noted that the current West End dump site was set in place as a temporary stop gap measure for the depositing of debris and solid waste that remained after Hurricane Matthew in 2016.

However, he noted that throughout the years, the site has become an eyesore and an environmental health issue for the residents of and visitors to the West End community.

"Today, I am pleased to announce that after strong representations from the Member of Parliament as well as the Administrator, the Office of the Prime Minister Grand Bahama has been given the mandate along with the Ministry of the Environment and Housing, to pool our resources and to clean-up the unsightly location," said Minister Thompson.

"The Ministry of Works has assessed the site and they have informed us that there is approximately one acre of land along Bayshore Road with 260 plus tons of debris.

"It is our intention to keep this site clean and limit the amount of waste that is being deposited until a more permanent transfer site can be established. Rest assured, we are actively working on establishing a more suitable site for the community of West End."

The clean-up will be carried out by a resident of West End, Ian Bowe, and his company. They were awarded a contract

for \$81,000. Minister Thompson said he has been assured that with the help of his hardworking team, Mr. Bowe will get the job done efficiently and swiftly.

The Minister of the Environment and Housing, said he was happy to have his Ministry be a part of the clean-up in West End.

He noted that the last time he was in Grand Bahama, he led the launch of the "Be a Hero" clean-up campaign for Freeport. The program focused on encouraging young people to take pride in their environment and initiate clean-up projects.

"The second phase of that campaign involves reaching out to communities and associations, like church groups and civic groups. So, this then becomes our first program where we are working with an Association and the Member of Parliament for a particular area," said Minister Ferreira.

"We want to make a meaningful contribution in the lives of the people that live in West End, and who have to pass that dump every day. We want it to be impactful for them, because they deserve a clean environment like everyone else.

"We make this appeal, as we go into the second phase of our 'Be a Hero' campaign that the people can reach out to us because the Ministry of Environment works for the people of The Bahamas. So we look at this project as an essential component of our work."

The signing of Thursday's contract was as a result of persistence that paid off.

Both Minister Kwasi Thompson and Minister Romauld Ferreira admitted that the Member of Parliament for the West End and Bimini constituency, and Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, was very persistent in appealing for something to be done with

the West End dump.

"We congratulate her for her persistence and we assure her of our continued support in all worthwhile endeavours," added Minister Ferreira.

Mrs. Parker-Edgecombe, on behalf of the residents of West Grand Bahama, thanked both the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Grand Bahama for "hearing their plea" and coming together to ensure that the dump is finally cleaned up.

"In coming to office, our constituents were very concerned about the eye sore of the dump and since then, we have been working feverishly to bring a remedy to the situation," added Mrs. Edgecombe. "It is very important that we keep our environment clean. I believe that we are a product of our environment and for West End, we do not wish to have any garbage at all.

"I take this opportunity to appeal to the residents of West End that in the cleaning up of this site that we move forward together to ensure that our community is kept clean. We are going to work towards making sure that all of our surrounding areas are cleaned and that includes the entire West Grand Bahama district.

"So, you will see in the coming weeks and in the coming months that intense clean-up campaigns will be underway. We do not think of just today, but we think about the future and every day to make sure that our environment remains clean."

Work on the clean-up is expected to start as early as Monday, March 18, 2019.

Minister Thompson invited every resident of West End to partner with the government, as it works to clean-up the environment and reduce the incidences of indiscriminate dumping in the West End community.

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Works Minister Offers Free Seminar to Assist Small Contractors with Improved Construction

In keeping with its mandate to provide training initiatives and opportunities to heighten awareness, the Ministry of Public Works (MOPW) announced on Thursday that it is hosting two workshops to improve the knowledge base of contractors.

"One of the core principles of this ministry is the sharing of knowledge with all of our stakeholders in order to improve the infrastructure and construction practices in The Bahamas," said Melony Roach, Director, MOPW.

"We believe that an informed contractor base is of vital importance to the delivery of service to the country. It is all well and good for the MOPW to do designs that are to international and local codes of practice and standards but if the contractors do not transfer our designs into proper construction practices then all of our work would have been in vain and we would have put the safety of the general public into question."

The Ministry, in conjunction with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) will host a National Contractor's Workshop on "Improved Construction Practices", in New Providence at Holy Trinity Activity Centre, Stapledon



► Pictured from left at the press conference to announce the workshops are Selena Curry, senior building inspector; Antoinette Thompson, Permanent Secretary; Melany Roach, Director and Damian Francis, Deputy Director. (BIS Photo/Derek Smith)

Gardens, Tuesday, March 19, 2019, and in Freeport at the Bahamas Public Services Union Hall, Thursday, March 21, 2019. The workshops are free of charge and will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Selena Curry, Senior Building Inspector, and Timothy Johnson, Acting Chief Architect, participated in a Caribbean Technology Consultancy Agency Network training initiative in Barbados recently that heightened the need to provide information for planning and building inspectors on the modality of improved construction practices.

Ms. Curry explained that the positioning of Caribbean countries in the heart of the hurricane belt makes the region susceptible to the impact of disasters including tropical storms, tornadoes and hurricanes.

"This sector is dominated by artisans who construct houses that are not in keeping with building standards and codes primarily due to their lack of knowledge and government compliance requirements.

"The housing sector is often severely affected by natural disasters in the Caribbean region constructed by informal building sector and usu-

ally operated outside the scope of formal construction industry practices regulated by the planning and building authorities," said Ms. Curry.

"We received training in ways that we can build more resilient houses to withstand a category 5 hurricane. The hurricanes are coming stronger and we are also experiencing earthquakes. We need to now build our structures to meet these challenges that are caused by climate change."

The objective is to share the knowledge and experience acquired by Ms. Curry and Mr.

Johnson with artisans, small contractors, draftsmen, building inspectors, small contractors and anyone who may be building a home or interested in construction.

"We now have bankers who are building contractors, [they are] coming from teaching, real estate; sometimes they come with some skills and apprenticeship and sometimes they come with as little as no knowledge. They are out in the field and they are building. The mandate is to train them and they can go and train the lay persons on the jobs to build more resilient houses."

Ms. Curry outlined some of the challenges that the Ministry is faced with in construction of homes. They include: homes which are constructed too close to the boundary, problems with the layout of the property e.g. finding out a property has cavities or blow-out holes, incorrect strength of the concrete mixture, selecting the best foundation.

"All of these we would like to impart to persons to become more cognizant of the construction field. They probably seem minor but when it comes to building the house, these can lead to complaints and in some cases litigations between the contractor and the homeowner," she added.

Antoinette Thompson, Permanent Secretary, said the Ministry believes in empowering employees.

"We know that it makes a difference in our employees when we allow them to be empowered and we are doing that for the professionals, for the allied professionals and the support staff," she said.

Interested persons can register online at mopw-contractors@bahamas.gov.bs. On-site registration is available. Space is limited.

Wilchcombe Disagrees

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Holding had won the multi-million dollar bid to redevelop and manage the Wharf.

However, Mr. Wilchcombe is advising the government to take a page out of the Nassau Airport Development model.

"NAD really was the idea, dealing with the project were Bahamians and we worked with Vancouver in the first instance."

"So what we need is to

put a NAD together and then we can seek a management team that will work with that Bahamian grouping to call for the management of the property," he said.

Aside from that, Mr. Wilchcombe contends that Global Ports' design for the Prince George Wharf just doesn't create a sense of place.

He said, "one of the things when we negotiated the airport with Vancouver that was one of the driving factors is a sense of place, where's the

sense of place at?

"I need that to represent the Bahamian people, so with that if you think about it, there will be new cost, a new paradigm, revenue and at the end of the day, I believe that the Bahamian people should be looking at it in a totally different way. I don't agree with the way we're doing it right now," he said.

The former Cabinet Minister does agree with the government's argument that the port needs to be improved.

PMH Gifted 25 New Beds

Continued from / PAGE 1...

provide high quality healthcare.

The Hospital is faced with a 200-bed shortage.

Public Hospitals Authority Deputy Managing Director Lyrone Burrows said the donation comes on the heels of an ongoing appeal to replace old patient beds throughout the facility.

He added that the PHA is working on improving wards throughout the hospital to significantly reduce the bed shortage issue.

"We obviously have a long term plan in terms of the expansion of the Princess Margaret Hospital, which obviously requires a significant amount of capital.

"We're looking to benefactors like the PMH Foundation, but as well as the Bahamian public at large, and international donors though our efforts.

"In the first phase, we're talking in the region of about \$200 million that needs to be funded to provide us with the necessary expansion that we're looking for," he said.

Mr. Burrows could not say when phase one of PMH's expansion will begin. However, he acknowledged that capital funding is the main issue.

"Obviously, everyone understands the position that the PHA is in terms of being able to meet its day to day recurrent needs.

"It is something that

we have had in our strategic plan and we're working to get higher levels of funding from the government, but also from donors as well," he said.

A number of wards were in need of repair adding to the bed shortage. Mr. Burrows said until those wards are up and running again, one of the hospital's strategies is to not hold any patient longer than expected.

"That is also a part of engaging in the new A and E development where we will be utilizing some of our public health clinics as our urgent care centers," he said.

Twenty-three of the new beds are earmarked for the ward Female Medical 1 and one each for the Gynae and Maternity wards.

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